



763-1215

**Attorney-General
Minister For Emergency Management**

MC13/07584

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

John
Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 29 May 2013, reference 763/1215, referring to me a petition regarding annual funding for the Far West Community Legal Centre in New South Wales.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the valuable work which all community legal centres, including Far West, do in helping to meet the legal needs of their respective communities. The Australian Government, through the Community Legal Services Program, currently funds 30 community legal centres in New South Wales at a cost of \$7.6 million in 2012-13.

I am very much aware of the challenges facing community legal centres, particularly in the current economic climate. From time to time, additional one-off funds become available for redistribution within my portfolio. I am pleased that a significant amount of those one-off funds are usually allocated to legal assistance providers, including community legal centres. I was very pleased to recently provide Far West Community Legal Centre with a one-off funding boost of \$215,000.

As you would be aware, as part of the recent 2013-14 Budget announcement, the Australian Government is providing a funding injection for community legal centres of \$10.3 million over four years. The purpose of this funding is to boost staff numbers for frontline service delivery to disadvantaged Australians and to alleviate funding pressures faced by the sector.

I am currently in the process of finalising allocations of this additional funding and I will take into consideration the request for funding from Far West Community Legal Centre when determining the final funding distribution.

Yours sincerely

MARK DREYFUS/QC MP

6/6/13